

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2912

As Passed House:
February 13, 2006

Title: An act relating to home visits by mental health professionals.

Brief Description: Requiring that mental health professionals do private home visits in pairs and providing for other safety and violence prevention measures.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Green, Appleton, Woods, Cody, Moeller, Haigh, Conway, Lantz, Hudgins, Roberts, McCoy, Kenney, Morrell, P. Sullivan, Hasegawa, Kilmer, Simpson and Ormsby).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/26/06, 1/31/06 [DPS];
Appropriations: 2/4/06 [DP2S(w/o sub HC)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/06, 76-22.

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Mental health workers who visit a client in their home or other nonpublic setting will be accompanied by another mental health worker.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Appleton, Clibborn, Green, Lantz, Moeller and Schual-Berke.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Bailey and Condotta.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Health Care. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Anderson, Assistant

Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, P. Sullivan and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Buri, Chandler, Clements, Hinkle, and Talcott.

Staff: Amy Skei (786-7140).

Background:

Designated mental health professionals and other mental health workers occasionally evaluate people for involuntary detention or do crisis outreach services in the person's home.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill:

Designated mental health professionals or other mental health crisis outreach workers who visit clients in their homes will be accompanied by another worker. Mental health workers who engage in home visits will be provided a cellular phone or similar device by their employer. Mental health workers dispatched on a crisis outreach visit will have access to existing case files on the client they are visiting. All community mental health workers who work directly with clients will be provided with training on safety and violence reduction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Health Care) This will improve safety of community mental health workers and result in fewer fatalities and injuries.

(With concerns) This will bring state coercion to the community and result in increased use of medication.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) We appreciate the passing of the Marty Smith resolution yesterday and this recognition of the state's mental health workers. Workers in our union are watching this bill closely. The substitute bill accommodates a wide variety of mental health stakeholders. It should reduce the fiscal note since, on average, clinicians and caseworkers make 10-40 percent less than designated mental health professionals (DMHPs). We estimate that 20 percent of DMHP responses are to private homes, so the estimate in the fiscal note seems a bit high. The fiscal note should reflect that some regional support networks already double up their DMHPs on visits to private homes. Also, it should reflect that not all DMHPs will need cell phones since some already have them and some workers would probably share them.

Testimony Against: (Health Care) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Persons Testifying: (Health Care) (In support) Representative Green, prime sponsor; Representative Woods; Jonathan Rosenblum, Vincent Wilson, Marie Manlangit and Hannah Antokol, Service Employees International Union 1199 Northwest; Yolanda Smith; Jean Wessman, Association of Counties; and Carole Willey, Holistic Health and Advocacy.

(With concerns) Richard Warner, Citizens Commission on Human Rights.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) Jonathan Rosenblum, Service Employees International Union #1199 North West.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Health Care) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.